2012, quite a year

The year 2012 was always going to be memorable not least because it marked the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. Not wishing to miss the opportunity for a party, the Village Association put together their plans for an event on Saturday to attract as many residents as possible. By the kind invitation of Dickie and Mary Allan, villagers assembled at York Farm for a pig roast lunch and diverse entertainments. For the children there was face painting and a bouncing castle, while the adults listened to folk songs from the Commonwealth sung by the Longmynds singing group. Later, Lepton Morris side gave us some traditional dancing while Rose Hips Belly Dancing group provided a more exotic element. Volunteers persuaded to try a belly dancing routine discovered that it was harder than it looked. Malcolm Brownword hosted an interesting audio visual show of his photos of recent village events and wildlife. The more imaginative residents competed for the best-decorated hat. In the evening, the dinner and wine tasting quiz, organised by Phil and Jo Taylor, stayed largely dry in the two marquees while the rain poured down outside.

On Sunday the marquee was in use again as many villagers joined together for a Songs of Praise. This was followed by refreshments which included a delicious ‘Union Jack’ cake.

These events rely on the efforts of many people. The Village Association provided the marquees, erected by an increasingly experienced team: the new tables and chairs, bought courtesy of Lottery funding, arrived in the nick of time, on Saturday morning. A host of other people worked behind the scenes to ensure the day was a success and by choosing the Saturday, the Village Association ensured we had the best weather of a largely wet weekend. Next, in early July, the Olympic Flame came to our region and we made our ways to Abingdon or Wallingford where we waited, in the rain, to take part in this once-in-a-lifetime event. The atmosphere was exciting and provided the opportunity for us all to get involved as the torch made its way to London. If you were watching closely, you will have seen Didcot Power Station’s cooling towers as one of the iconic images in the film shown at the start of the opening ceremony. Some lucky people had tickets for the Olympic or Paralympic events but others watched the road cycling or marathon from the streets of London.

Village Association

The Village Association membership includes all residents of West Hagbourne and its committee works to provide events and entertainments during each year. Having established an annual Dragon Competition to celebrate St George’s Day this has now become a notable local event, attracting both media attention and many visitors to the village. This year we led the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations, funded a new marquee and won a lottery grant that provided new tables and chairs for the benefit of residents’ use at future events.

The AGM was held on 8th October. New members are urgently needed for the Committee. If you are interested in joining, contact Val Walton on 851 089.

Twinning visit

Mid-September saw West Hagbourne once again establishing its international credentials by welcoming friends from our twin town of Meylan, France. Over the past 10 years many twinning visitors have got to know our lovely village and this time we hosted 7 of the total group of 17, including the mayor of Meylan. Didcot and the surrounding villages are twinned with Meylan and with Planegg, in Germany.

As well as trips to our twin towns the twinning association organises fund-raising and social events and if you think you would like to get involved with twinning, please contact Sue Totterdell and see the website: www.didcottwinning.org.uk

Is it fast enough?

Broadband speeds, or lack of speed continue to be an issue for West Hagbourne residents. Following the disappointment of the ‘Race to Infinity’ not delivering fibre optic broadband all the way to the village, many villagers feel there is room for improvement. To date, relatively few households in the village have made the change. You can only benefit if you change your package with your broadband provider. The broadband provider needs to switch you over to a “Fibre to the Cabinet” (FTTC) package and have new equipment installed on your property.” Currently BT is providing speed of 10 - 20 mbps to some, depending on which package you buy and where you live, but speeds still fall significantly at peak times and can fail to support such services as catch-up TV and video streaming.

Some who have switched over have found that whilst the speeds are significantly higher, they are not a fast as expected from “BT Infinity” and there can be fluctuations. This would be improved if we could persuade BT to install fibre to the cabinet at the bottom of York Road instead of just to a cabinet in Upton, but currently they have no plans to do that. South Oxfordshire District Council is conducting a survey about rural areas which are being excluded from faster services and this can be accessed on at: https://myconsultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Select ‘Demand better Broadband (Residents)’ and complete the questionnaire if you think faster broadband should be available in West Hagbourne. ACT NOW - the survey closes on December 31st.

Looking good

Residents are rightly proud of West Hagbourne and it is important to thank those people who make a special effort to keep it looking good.

So thanks to all those people who bring colour and perfume to their front gardens for us all to enjoy, to those who pick up rubbish while out for a walk, to those who trim the shrubs around the village signs and keep the planters blooming and watered, to the people who keep footpaths mown and clear, to anyone who works behind the scenes for the benefit of us all.

In addition, we are always grateful to the volunteers who help with the litter collections organised by the Parish Council. If you are prepared to get involved, dates of future litter-picks will be advertised in this newsletter.

You may have noticed that there have been some changes to the gardens beside the bus shelter this year. As part of the movement to encourage more insects, we decided to replace the diseased rose bushes with some wild flowers. After a very dry start and then a lot of rain, they did finally flower. Hopefully next year they will be even better. Some replanting of the beds on the other side of the bus shelter is planned for 2013.

You may also have spotted that there are three new wooden tubs under the Horse Chestnut tree, paid for by the Parish Council. Over summer these were planted with gold, silver and bronze plants to mark the Olympics and they are currently planted with bulbs to provide colour in spring.

You may also have noticed that the planter by the noticeboard in York Road has gone missing. If you know anything about where this went, please get in touch with the Clerk parishclerk@westhagbourne.org
**News**

**Changes to your newsletter**

After a brief hiatus in its publication, we hope that normal Newsletter service will be restored. We have agreed to take on editing the newsletter for a trial period and we encourage contributions and feedback (ideally constructive).

*If you view the newsletter at the website all the hotlinks will work, making navigation much easier.*

You may not know, but for some time this newsletter has been funded entirely from the income from advertisers and we hope that this will continue to be the case so that it can be distributed free to all households.

We also hope that the Parish Council will make use of the newsletter to update residents about what they have been doing on our behalf. Merry Christmas!

Marion Judd and Sue Totterdell

**Madge Trophy winner**

Each year, in a different month, the best garden is judged. This year, the Trophy was won by Shirley Beechey of 5 Grove Terrace for her colourful garden that welcomes everyone to the village as they enter from Brook Lane.

**Charity events**

In September Macmillan Cancer Support hold their “Biggest Coffee Morning” fundraising event. This is supported by various local businesses and schools. For the past two years, a Cocktails and Canapés for Cancer relief, hosted by Sue & Dave Totterdell, has been part of the West Hagbourne fundraising effort, this year raising £360 for the charity.

*If you are planning a charity fundraising event and would like to publicise it in this newsletter, please get in touch with the editors. editors@westhagbourne.org*

**Community plan**

Many of you will recall the Parish Plan produced in 2006 and expired last year. The Parish Plan document, circulated to every house, was the result of an extensive survey of the hopes and aspirations of villagers. South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) is now encouraging villages to update Parish Plans, calling them Community-led Plans (CLP).

A short questionnaire will be delivered to every house in the village and we encourage you to complete and return this so that your views are taken into account. SODC tells us that we need to have responses from almost all households if our CLP is to be taken seriously. One copy of the questionnaire will be delivered to each house, and one person can respond on behalf of all the residents there.

However, if you each want to make individual comments, please ask for an additional copy, or you can print yourself one out from the village website www.westhagbourne.org.

If you want to expand on any of your answers or raise additional issues, please return these on an additional piece of paper.

An important outcome from the Parish Plan was that there are lots of ideas in the village but that we need volunteers prepared to get involved to take projects further. So, there will also be an opportunity to offer your services.

**Gardening Club**

On Thursday Jan 24th Malcolm Brownsword presents an audio visual show featuring a selection of gardens and stately homes, ‘Scaracrow Olympics’, the Dragon competition, Hagbourne Show, Bledlow NGS Open Gardens and local wildlife. Something for everyone!

Show starts 7.30 – Tea and Coffee served from 7.00. Visitors welcome.

Tel: Jenny Smith on 01235 815897 for further information

**the Tyrrell Trust**

The Tyrrell Trust is a small local charity offering grants to West Hagbourne village residents, in particular to younger people needing financial help to fund musical, educational, sporting or other worthwhile initiatives involving self-development and/or community service. In the past grants have been awarded to help with fundraising for World Challenge or other charitable or educational expeditions and for national-level sporting activities. Under the terms of the Trust, grants would also be considered for any resident experiencing severe hardship.

If you are interested in applying for a grant, please contact Patsy Ryman (850-092) or Marion Judd (850-143) for more information. Grants are available for individuals or groups (up to £500 for groups). Applications should be sent to Patsy Ryman, 10 Manor Close, West Hagbourne, giving details of the project to be sponsored.

**Hagbourne Charities**

Since the 17th Century, Hagbourne Charities has existed to benefit the residents of the Parishes of East and West Hagbourne. Trustees are drawn from both Parishes and currently Sue Lay and Marion Judd represent our Parish. The Charity has a small income drawn from land ownership and investments. For the past few years, an annual disbursement has been made to the Didcot Volunteer Centre that arranges transport provided by a band of volunteer drivers for elderly and disabled people to access medical, hospital and other appointments.

**New residents**

In 2012 we welcomed new residents to Stags Lodge, Rosland, Lime Croft, 5 Grove Terrace and the Laurels.

**Deaths in 2012**

- In February, **Margaret Hedger** who is missed by many friends in the village and beyond.
- **Mary Wiley** suddenly in November. When Mary retired she decided to fulfill her dream of researching the history of West Hagbourne. Those of us who volunteered to help had no inkling that we were about to embark on a journey into the past which would take nine years. It was Mary’s enthusiasm, energy and inspiration which kept us going. She herself was tireless in seeking information, writing hundreds of letters and travelling to record offices and historical archives far and wide (this was before internet and Google). Her greatest coup was coming across the missing name of one of our war dead, quite by chance, whilst on a visit to war graves in Italy. One figure, however, eluded her—the mysterious Father Anthony of Thatch Cottage whom she pursued relentlessly but to no avail. She suffered endless teasing about her obsession with this enigmatic priest. Mary’s intellect and memory were formidable and she could recite the chronology of the kings and queens of England without hesitation—a great asset to have on your quiz team. Mary had a wonderful sense of fun and loved a celebration but she was no pushover. Her tact and charm served us well in some tricky situations.

As well as founder of the History Group and driving force in publishing a written history, Mary served the community of West Hagbourne in many ways. She was always helping others and was a Parish Councillor. She single-handedly planted the garden next to the war memorial/bus shelter. She was also a founding member of the East-West Hagbourne Society. Mary wore her Christian faith lightly but lived it deeply. We were all blessed by knowing her and feel bereft at her passing.

Sheila Taylor – Village History Group
Sue Lay

September for many and the rain still
Harvest in July/August went on into
Then during May/June when the crops
was applied before the rain came.
Once they do they fly away.
Spring we took great delight in
was about to fall out of the tree. This
replaced the nesting box as the other
during the winter and also we had
female at the back of the house
resident kestrels as we found a dead
herd!). We were concerned about our
We have the usual Muntjac around
farmer.
just immediately contact the local
you ever see them, do not approach,
deal with, which is no mean task so if
They're better left for the police to
destroying crops and tormenting
people who train and run their dogs
problems with the coursers, bands of
We have been submitted to no end of
fallen trees.
where broken, checking the
hedgerows, coppicing and clearing up
fallen trees.
We have been submitted to no end of
problems with the coursers, bands of
people who train and run their dogs
all over the land chasing and killing
the hares and deer. They have no
regard for property, cutting fences,
destroying crops and tormenting
animals. To people, if confronted,
use threatening behaviour.
They're better left for the police to
deal with, which is no mean task so if
you ever see them, do not approach,
just immediately contact the local
farmer.
We have the usual Muntjac around
the farm but also the pretty little Roe
Deer. A small group of these live up
on the hill (not enough to be called a
herd!). We were concerned about our
resident kestrels as we found a dead
female at the back of the house
during the winter and also we had
replaced the nesting box as the other
was about to fall out of the tree. This
spring we took great delight in
watching the pair return and hatch
and rear two healthy chicks. Watching
them learn to fly was a great treat as
once they do they fly away.
Most of the fertiliser and the fungicide
was applied before the rain came.
Then during May/June when the crops
were flowering, the rain just rained.
Harvest in July/August went on into
September for many and the rain still
came. The crops that had looked so
well in the spring desperately needed
the sunshine to ripen them. This
affected the wheat yield because the
grain was shrivelled and it brought the
bushel weights down (yes, still using
bushels!) and the quality and
morphine level in the poppy crop
diminished.
Because of the shortage of wheat
around the world, mainly due to
adverse weather conditions, prices
have kept up, which is good for those
in arable but not so good for those
with animals to feed because the cost
of concentrate has escalated too. Fuel
costs are also high raising the cost of
drying. Fortunately, we have a grain
store, enabling us to watch the
market price and sell when we want
to.
We managed to plant most of our
Autumn planting, but only 40% of the
country's wheat crop has been
planted due to the wet conditions.
Many fields look more like padd
fields! We have had 40 inches of rain
so far this year when we normally
average 24-26 inches!! Who said
nature doesn't balance itself out!
Hopefully farmers will be able to
change their cropping and plant or
replant other crops in the spring.
We have planted winter oil seed rape and
plan to plant the poppies in the
spring.
As you may have noticed, Nicky has
been out with the hedge cutter,
tidying up the road and field sides. We
are limited to cutting certain
hedgerows each year through the
Entry Level Scheme.
Some of our family are living at Manor
Farm with us at the moment and I am
very fortunate to have Lily-Ella aged
five as my little country companion.
Sue Lay

Parish Council

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South Oxfordshire District Council
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Oxfordshire County Council
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Planning applications
You can search for any current or
past planning applications, view
plans, see decisions based on your
post code at
https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node
representations at this link -
https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node
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past planning applications, view
plans, see decisions based on your
post code at
representations is 7 January 2013 and
villagers who wish to do so can make
representations is 7 January 2013 and
villagers who wish to do so can make
representations at this link -
https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node
The Parish Council is yet to finalise its
response but it is likely that we will
be supporting the SODC proposal to
keep us separate from Didcot and
place us in a ward with other villages.
Our understanding is that Didcot
Town Council will be supporting this
proposal also. This process does not
alter the parish boundary, which
currently encompasses part of Great
Western Park, but there will be a
separate consultation on that
in 2013 and the opinion of villagers will
be sought.

other news
In an accident involving two cars on
the A437 on Saturday 9th November,
a section of the fence bordering the
Tyrrell Trust land was demolished.
Despite substantial flooding in Brook
Lane following the recent heavy rain
at least the pond is full again.
Call for Singers

If you like to sing, perhaps you would like to join Longmynds Singing Group. The brainchild of Eva Pinkava, this friendly group meets every Monday at Longmynds, Foxglove Lane, to learn new songs and practice its repertoire. It helps if you read music but this is not essential. It helps if you speak Czech but this is not essential either. All voices welcome.

Do you belong to a club or society that would like to advertise its meetings and/or recruit new members? Please get in touch and we will include something in the next newsletter.

editors@westhagbourne.org

Businesses

Businesses currently based in West Hagbourne:
- Rosey Gardiner - TineTune Time
- Hagbourne Farm Plumbing - Matt Lay
- Age Content Respond24 - Rob Baker
- Bare Essentials - Becky Lay
- Contented Childcare - Aimee Lay
- Scotland's Ash Garage - Peter Welch
- Little Acorns Nursery at Scotland's Ash
- Square Wave Systems Ltd - Hugh Lewis
- Garden designs - Mary Ann Le May
- PT5 - Computer & AV - Richard Pladdy

If you run a business in West Hagbourne, and would like to tell us about what you do, please get in touch.

Hagbourne School

Headmaster Richard Jones retired at the end of the summer term after 23 years as Head. Many West Hagbourne children attended the school during this time and will have happy memories of their primary schooling under his leadership. This autumn term, the school has continued with Mrs Annette Crewe as the newly appointed Head Teacher.

Sue Lay needs someone in the village (any age) who could help her out with her ducks, chickens and pigs when she is away or at meetings etc. Call Sue on 01235 850738.